

EVOLUTION OF THE PLAN

Building for Strength: North Carolina's Strategic Plan for Preventing Injuries and Violence 2009-2014 is a blueprint for building and strengthening injury and violence prevention efforts in North Carolina through a systems-level approach. The plan is meant to coordinate injury prevention activities at both the state and local levels, and can be used as a guide for any agency or group working to prevent injuries. Injury prevention partners can look to this plan for help determining priorities and making funding decisions.

The shared ownership of this plan can be seen from its origins — it came out of the collaborative effort of injury and violence prevention partners from across the state. Though the process was initiated and led by the DPH's IVPB, it was only possible because of the contributions of numerous injury and violence prevention professionals.

To lay the foundation for the plan, an initial meeting of key stakeholders took place on October 2 and 3, 2008. An outcome of that meeting was a statement of the plan's desired impact, which is to reduce morbidity and mortality related to injury and violence in North Carolina. Further, the group outlined a vision, purpose and guiding principles for the document, which are outlined below:

Vision

- People are living longer, with high-quality lives, and are fully productive.
- Environments have built-in safety and protective components.
- The consequences of violence are clear, and there is widespread recognition that violence is not acceptable.

Purpose

- Build a multi-disciplinary, unified approach to injury and violence prevention.
- Identify, prioritize and address issues for greatest impact on reducing morbidity and mortality rates.
- Identify injury and violence's root causes and effective prevention interventions.
- Coordinate policy and influence attitudes and behaviors around injury and violence prevention.
- Facilitate effective and integrated injury and violence prevention efforts at the local, regional and state levels.
- Institutionalize injury and violence prevention (IVP) as a major player in the public health system at all levels, appropriately reflecting the magnitude of the injury and violence problem in the state.

Guiding Principles

- Serve and treat all people equitably, being inclusive and socially and culturally relevant.
- Use best available data and/or evidence to guide decisions and practices, and be fair and transparent in decisions and actions.
- Foster an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach with due attention to root causes.
- Critically evaluate and monitor injury prevention initiatives, and adapt as necessary.

Once the impact, vision, purpose and guiding principles were set out, the partners completed the work of that meeting by creating the six goals of this plan, which are listed in the Executive Summary. The next building block for the plan was the creation of draft objectives setting strategies, timelines and benchmarks to achieving the goals. Partners met again to write the objectives using surveillance data, evidence-based prevention strategies, review of blue-ribbon expert panel recommendations such as Healthy People 2010, and input from key stakeholders. External factors such as current public opinion, availability of resources, and the political landscape were also considered.

Feedback on the draft objectives was solicited through an online survey that gathered input from a broader field of injury and violence prevention professionals. Nearly 50 respondents offered their opinions via the survey. To finalize the objectives, the input from the stakeholder survey and review of expert recommendations from the North Carolina Institute of Medicine task forces on prevention and adolescent health were combined. Further, the staff of the IVPB sought input from topic-area experts through a series of one-on-one meetings to gather in-depth feedback.

To complete the plan, a third in-person meeting took place on April 27, 2009. At that meeting, over 75 injury and violence prevention professionals came together to create the action steps that will be taken to achieve the objectives.

Another outcome of the April meeting was that groups known as goal teams were formed. Members of the goal teams are experts in the area covered by that goal. The goal team members will also work to carry out the action steps going forward.

Crucial to the success of the plan will be the buy-in and commitment of the goal team members to be active participants in the plan's implementation.

In August 2009, the Injury and Violence Prevention State Advisory Council (IVP-SAC) was formed. This group is tasked with monitoring and advancing the overall plan by promoting collaboration among appropriate partners, fostering awareness of injury and violence prevention, supporting implementation of this plan and advocating for injury prevention at the local state and national levels. The Council's membership is appointed by the State Health Director and is made up of the leaders of the goal teams, staff from the Division of Public Health Injury and Violence Prevention Branch and other key content area experts.

The other partners involved in the construction of this plan are those traditionally involved in injury and violence prevention in North Carolina. These include hospitals; the state and local public health departments, including the DPH and Healthy Carolinians Partnerships; Trauma Center Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) that include representation from hospitals, pre-hospital providers, law enforcement and health agencies and others; researchers at North Carolina medical and academic institutions; the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program; the N.C. Department of Insurance's Office of State Fire Marshal, including Safe Kids Coordinators; and a number of nonprofits focused on specific prevention areas such as sexual violence, driving while impaired, and domestic violence. The long history of successful injury and violence prevention initiatives undertaken by these groups shows their commitment to and capacity for carrying out this plan to build the strength of North Carolina's injury prevention system.